

Community Partnerships – Tool Kit

In Saskatchewan there is a strong tradition of co-operation. Municipalities in particular have a history of working together to deliver services such as fire protection and shared administration.

As municipalities consider ways to better use their resources they are looking for tools to help them plan and manage the process of voluntary amalgamation/restructuring, dissolution, partnerships and service agreements.

This spring several legislative amendments to *The Urban Municipality Act, 1984* and *The Rural Municipality Act, 1989* were passed. These changes provide municipalities with the flexibility they need to make local decisions to consolidate municipal services.

In addition to these changes the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing has developed a “Tool Kit” for municipalities interested in assessing community needs and developing partnerships with neighboring communities.

The information available will include:

- Municipal viability criteria
- Status comparison charts
- Process for dissolution, annexation and restructuring
- Municipal responsibility issues such as environmental liability
- Aggregate information on revenues, expenditures and grants
- Frequently asked questions
- Links to related sites

The “Tool Kit” is now available on the department’s web site at www.municipal.gov.sk.ca

Reorganization means efficient service

At Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs and Housing, our clients and stakeholders are our number one priority.

With a view to serving you more efficiently, we recently changed our organizational structure to provide consistent core services to our clients and stakeholders. The changes will allow the department to focus on building greater expertise and specialization in services to stakeholders.

Similar functions in the department will now be handled in a uniform manner across all sectors. For example, protection and emergency services that relate primarily to the municipal sector—such as Emergency Planning, Sask911, Building Standards and Office of the Fire Commissioner—have been integrated and consolidated with other services to the municipal sector.

Licensing and inspection services in the areas of social housing and public safety are now working together, ensuring a consistent approach and a commitment to innovation in delivering inspection services.

The Community Support Services branch is now called the Community and Heritage Services branch. This branch's structure is organized along functional (rather than regional) lines to ensure consistency in the delivery of services throughout the province, as well as facilitate enhanced methods of service delivery such as on-line provision of information and training. Advice to municipalities continues to be available through contacts that specialize in specific service areas.

Municipal governments are becoming more autonomous and the Department is focusing on services that enable municipalities to function independently. The Department's new electronic Tool Kit and our expanded web site are two such examples—augmenting the legal and technical advice and information currently available from your municipal associations and through independent agents.

As part of our renewed emphasis on efficient service to clients and stakeholders, we are distributing a Directory of Services along with this edition of *Municipalities Today*. The directory lists key programs and services provided by our Department, along with up-to-date addresses, fax and telephone numbers. The Directory is viewable (and printable) on our web site at: www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/municipalities/directory.asp

We hope you will find the directory to be a useful reference.

Canada Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program – Update

The Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program committed \$24 million combined federal and provincial funding for 2001-02 to 88 projects.

- 45 water supply or water pipeline projects
- 17 waste water
- 22 roads or streets
- 2 energy efficiency
- 1 solid waste
- 1 strategic project

The applications for the second year of the program were mailed out at the end of July with a return deadline of October 15, 2001 and more than 440 applications were received.

The Project Review Committee with representatives from the federal and provincial governments, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and the Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities are now reviewing the applications. Their recommendations on the project proposals will be provided to the Management Committee.

The successful municipalities are expected to receive funding approval by the end of January 2002.

Under the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program the federal and provincial government provide up to two thirds of the eligible costs of community projects. Communities provide the remaining costs of the project. This tripartite agreement will provide more than \$170 million for Saskatchewan infrastructure projects over five years.

Urban Legislation for Cities

The Mayors from Saskatchewan's 13 Cities are seeking more autonomy through legislation. In October, the Mayors presented the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH) with a proposal for a "Cities Act" that would broaden the scope of their authority and provide more flexibility in administration.

Minister Osika has indicated that he advocates working with the cities to draft legislation toward modernizing the provincial-municipal relationship and will support this initiative within government.

As with any new legislation, it is essential that a thorough review be conducted. The Cities' proposals include policy changes. A new Cities Act would have significant implications for about 60 per cent of Saskatchewan people in terms of municipal governance and services. As a result, it is important that the government consult with municipal associations, business groups, and the public. The Act needs to be flexible enough for cities to encourage new and existing economic activity, while ensuring that the rights and privileges of citizens are maintained.

In the coming months stakeholders should have an opportunity to fully review and comment on the impact of this legislation before it is tabled. MAH is committed to consultations with a view toward obtaining input from all parties.

The Department is already reviewing the proposals in detail with city officials to identify issues that will require provincial government decisions. This process will also help to ensure that the implications of all proposals have been carefully considered. MAH has also provided copies of the Cities' proposals to SUMA, SARM, SSTA and the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association for comments.

The proposed legislation would stand alone for cities, while the existing urban act would govern towns and villages.

Celebrate Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan will be celebrating its 100th birthday in 2005. In preparation for this historic event, the government established a Centenary Fund in the 2000-01 budget to help accelerate important capital projects.

This fund ensures that Saskatchewan's schools, highways, parks and other public-use facilities are a source of growing pride when the province celebrates its centenary.

More than 180 applications for the municipal infrastructure core area were received by the application deadline of December 31, 2000

In 2000-01, there were 14 municipal infrastructure projects, six housing projects and 15 transit for the disabled vehicles approved. In 2001-02, 16 municipal infrastructure projects received funding and 15 transit for the disabled vehicles were approved. The Centenary Fund projects approved from 2001 through 2004 will use the balance of the funding available in the municipal infrastructure area.

Centenary Fund Projects Announced as of November 2, 2001

Community	Project	Centenary Fund Contribution \$
Saskatoon	Broadway Theatre Stage and dressing rooms	2001-02: 250,000 2002-03: 50,000
Town of Balgonie	Fire hall and training centre	2001-02: 39,300 2002-03: 26,300
Town of Big River	Big River and District Community Centre	2001-02: 63,200 2003-04: 89,800
Village of Vibank	Multipurpose building for town (first response, fire hall, shop)	2000-01: 64,000
Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks and Conservation Authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meewasin Valley • (Saskatoon) • Wakamow Valley (Moose Jaw) • Wascana Centre (Regina) • Chinook Parkway (Swift Current) • Battlefords River Valley (North Battleford) • Tatagwa (Weyburn) 	Capital projects for urban parks	2001-02: 500,000 2002-03: 500,000 2003-04: 500,000
Regina	Saskatchewan Capital Signage Project-design production and placement of five new gateway signs	2001-02: 75,000
Saskatoon North Battleford	Western Development Museum- "Winning the Prairie Gamble"	2000-01: 1,053,000 2001-02: 815,000

Community	Project	Centenary Fund Contribution \$
Moose Jaw Yorkton	exhibits	2002-03: 650,000 2003-04: 482,000
Regina	Sask. Science Centre-environmental lab, computer lab and exhibits	2000-01: 50,000 2001-02: 25,000 2002-03: 50,000 2003-04: 115,000
Various	Northern Water and Sewer projects coordinated with CSIP	2000-01: 2,500,000 2001-02: 2,500,000 2002-03: 2,500,000 2003-04: 2,500,000
Saskatoon	Community Services Village	2000-01: 250,000
Various	SERM – establish regional waste management authorities to establish new facilities and decommission others	2000-01: 575,000 2001-02: 575,000
Melfort	Melfort Creek Linear Park Centenary Project-pathways, landscaping, lighting, interpretive stations, shelterbelts, parking & reservoir	2001-02: 65,000
Martensville	Wheatland Regional Library Branch and Youth Centre	2001-02: 45,000
Moose Jaw	Redevelopment of River Street-develop pedestrian oriented public area along historic storefronts	2000-01: 20,000 2001-02: 225,000 2002-03: 225,000
Humboldt	Develop a natural ecological urban park	2001-02: 6,000 2002-03: 5,000
Goodsoil	Construction of a community multipurpose court	2001-02: 14,700
Moose Jaw	Cultural Centre	2002-03: 250,000 2003-04: 250,000
Biggar	Addition of one bay to fire hall	2001-02: 41,400
Meadow Lake	Expansion of fire hall	2001-02: 100,000
Melville	Upgrade baseball diamonds and install lighting	2000-01: 256,000
Maple Creek	Resurface regional airport runway	2000-01: 35,000
Shaunavon	Resurface regional airport runway	2000-01: 10,000
Air Ronge	Pahkisimon Nuye?ah Library System-Construction of region headquarter building	2000-01: 550,000
Gull Lake	Regional Emergency Services Building	2000-01: 87,000
Wilkie	Addition to fire hall for emergency response unit	2000-01: 30,000
La Loche	La Loche housing initiative	2000-01: 3,000,000
Prince Albert	Abbeyfield Housing Project	2000-01: 150,000
Regina	Seniors Life Lease Project-Benson School	2000-01: 2,250,000
Saskatoon	The Saskatoon Housing initiative Partnership (SHIP)	2000-01: 50,000
Saskatoon	Renovating and refurbishing the YWCA	2000-01: 341,000

Community	Project	Centenary Fund Contribution \$
Saskatoon	Seniors Life Lease Project, Arbor Green	2000-01: 900,000
Yorkton	Seniors Life Lease Project	2000-01: 2,250,000
Various	Transit for the disabled vehicle replacement 15 vehicles per year at 75% of cost to a maximum of \$55,000 per vehicle.	2000-01: 821,000 2001-02: 825,000 2002-03: 825,000 2003-04: 825,000

Emergency Planning

The terrorist events in the United States on September 11th have created a climate of global insecurity. They have also increased the awareness of Canadians of the need for up-to-date emergency response plans.

Saskatchewan Emergency Planning (SEP) is the provincial government's lead agency for emergency management. SEP coordinates overall provincial emergency planning, training and response operations before, during and after an emergency or disaster.

The first level of government response in dealing with an emergency is the local authority. If the local municipality needs more resources than they have at their disposal, such as equipment or personnel, it would contact a neighboring municipality. When these two combined levels of response are exceeded the local authority may request provincial government assistance. Once provincial government involvement occurs, federal support can be arranged if needed.

When to declare a state of emergency

- A local emergency declaration is defined as an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of people and property in the area.

What a state of emergency means

- There is a real and immediate threat to life, health and safety of people and property and local emergency plans or actions are put into place.
- A local emergency declaration expires at the end of seven days from the time of the declaration.

It is important to remember that financial assistance under The Provincial Disaster Assistance Program may be requested without declaring an emergency.

Purpose of the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program

- To provide financial assistance for substantial loss or damage of essential, uninsurable property caused by a natural disaster.

Eligibility criteria

- In the case of local government authority the loss or damage must be equal to or greater than a 0.65 mill levy on the most recent taxable assessment of the designated area, or \$1,000,000 whichever is less; or
- In the case of privately owned property the total damage to uninsurable property in the area must exceed \$25,000 in total or at least one individual must incur \$5,000 damage to uninsurable property.

Procedures for requesting assistance

- A municipal council must pass a resolution that designates an area as eligible for assistance.
- The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing will review the resolution and the circumstances will be reviewed to determine if the area is eligible for assistance.
- Application forms for disaster assistance will then be available from the local municipal office. The applications need to be completed and returned to the municipal office within six months of the natural disaster.
- After the municipal office has collected the applications, the program administrator will arrange to have government appointed adjusters inspect and assess the damage. Payments are generally made within 30 days of receiving all the relevant information.
- People should wait until a government adjuster has inspected the damage before making repairs. However, compensation is available for emergency repairs necessary to prevent further loss or damage.

Northern Water and Sewer

Last July the government, in co-operation with the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account Management Board, announced a \$24.9 million commitment to a four-year Northern Water and Sewer Assistance Program.

The money will provide new systems in eight small communities that do not have any public water and sewer services. It will also provide a completely new system for Stony Rapids and upgrades for 25 other communities.

The program is in its second year of operation and has already provided much needed water and sewer services to communities in the North.

- The water system at Cumberland House was upgraded at a cost of more than \$700,000.
- A \$5.4 million conventional water and sewer system at Stony Rapids is 30 per cent complete and is expected to be finished by the fall of 2002.
- Tenders for seven projects have been awarded, with work to start in this fall or next spring with an estimated cost of \$2.8 million.

- Approximately \$5.3 million will be spent on eight approved projects for 2001 and three, to date, for 2002.

The government is also working with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and First Nations to ensure co-ordination of water and sewer system construction with Reserves near or adjacent to northern municipalities.

The development of water and wastewater systems are important elements in the ongoing support for northern economic and growth opportunities. The program is expected to create 80 seasonal jobs during the construction of projects. There will also be a number of long-term jobs created for qualified operators to maintain and operate the new systems.

To maximize the benefit of the project, the program also includes a housing upgrade component that will allow suitable non-modern houses in the community to have plumbing installed. To date more than 60 houses in six of the seven communities have been inspected.

Note from the Editor:

Most municipalities will now be receiving five copies of *Municipalities Today*. We encourage you to circulate the newsletter in your office and share the information with your colleagues, or read *Municipalities Today* on the Department's web site at: www.municipal.gov.sk.ca

If you require additional printed copies please contact Arleen Neu by email at aneu@mah.gov.sk.ca